



UNIVERSITY OF
SAN FRANCISCO

Gleeson Library |
Geschke Center

Ontario Review

Volume 68 *Spring/Summer* 2008

Article 24

June 2014

"Mrs. Grossheim's, 1955," "Never Again"

Ronald Wallace

Follow this and additional works at: <http://repository.usfca.edu/ontarioreview>



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wallace, Ronald (2014) ""Mrs. Grossheim's, 1955," "Never Again"," *Ontario Review*: Vol. 68, Article 24.
Available at: <http://repository.usfca.edu/ontarioreview/vol68/iss1/24>

For more information, please contact southern@usfca.edu.

Two Poems

RONALD WALLACE

Mrs. Grossheim's, 1955

It was on fire — Mrs. Grossheim's store,
with its beat-up wooden tables and wooden floor
cluttered with wonders. But we were only twelve,
so when we saw the smoke, could we believe
our eyes? And wouldn't Mrs. Grossheim have
it all under control? Her weathered hands
and grizzled brow and musical commands —
Hey you! Sweet things! Come on into my store!

Did she die? Did she lose everything? Did we
think that world immune to time and chance?
Could we have saved her? There's a Walgreen's
on the corner now, slick magazines
our substitutes for what was once romance.
Did she count on us to save her? Did she?

Never Again

How many times in the history of regret
 have we heard that phrase: *never again!*
 Given the mishap, the scandal, the disaster,
 the unthinkable coming to pass
 (and how could it have happened?)
 we shake our collective heads.
 We grow solemn. We're outraged, we're
 incredulous. We trot our poor
 sympathies out. And then

we set up our panels and commissions,
 commence our investigations, issue
 statements and advisories and reports.
 We note mistakes were made.
 We remove the bad apples from the bin.
 We put into place procedures,
 institute new rules and regulations,
 provide watchdogs and fail-safes,
 backups and redundant systems.

We've all learned a painful lesson. Next time
 we'll leave nothing to chance.
 We'll get to the bottom of it. It
 will never happen again.
 And again. And again.